

**Describe the practice proposed for recognition, and list its objectives. Detail how the practice is innovative, how it promotes high achievement and how it can be replicated.**

**EL JUEGO\*\*** The third level of language study frequently is a time when students find themselves bogged down in a never-ending struggle with vocabulary and grammatical structures. In an effort to inject some levity into the everyday routine, **EL JUEGO** was designed. Students are told that they have been recruited by the toy company *Funferal* and will be assigned to the international games design division. They are given the task of creating a new, original game for the Spanish language market. All rules, game markings, and decorations must be written exclusively in Spanish. Students take part in a brief brainstorming session in which the elements of a successful and fun game are discussed. Design teams consisting of four students, selected by students, or formed by teachers, are given guidelines regarding the timelines that they will have to follow and the responsibilities of each member of the design team.

On the first day, students are given specific details of their task. They are instructed to design a board game directed at players in one of two age groups: six years to twelve years old, or thirteen years old to adult. As part of the family tradition of the *Funferal* company, they are told that games must not include any violence or suggestion of violent or dangerous behavior. All students in the group take part in the general discussion and must agree on the basic elements of the game. The game must be constructed in the classroom using supplies such as construction paper, oaktag, index cards, markers, glue, fasteners, poster paint, pencils, pens, clay, and used magazines. If computers are available, students may also use clip art or other images that they print. The game the students build is not mechanical and may only make use of items generated in the classroom.

Each member of the design team is given a specific task to complete in addition to the overall design and construction of the game itself. One student is assigned to write a summary statement for the company archives to be presented to the Chairperson of the Board, the teacher, describing what the object of the game is, a brief overview of the rules, and the method of determining the winner. Another student is directed to write a press release, which will be distributed as part of our pre-marketing campaign. The press release should provide information about the game, its target market, and any other information that will generate interest in the product. A third student will be instructed to write a news article to be released to a parents' magazine and other teen publications which will describe our game and the reaction of test groups and other experts who have supposedly reviewed our game. The students are told to imagine what these positive reactions would claim. The final member of the team writes a speech to be delivered to the marketing chair, the teacher, in which information about the game, research group reactions to the game and other marketing plans are discussed. Submissions from each student are usually limited to about 150 words. The number of students in the class will determine the total number of design teams. If necessary, one of the roles can be eliminated to allow for smaller groups. We have usually had six separate groups of four in each class, which results in six different games.

Students work individually on their specific assignments and as a group work for about three days on the preparation of the game and the rules. With one day for initial planning, and one day for final presentations and play, five days are used. Each game must be submitted in an appropriate and attractive package, and of course the game must be ready for play with all parts and rules. On the final day of the activity, presentation speeches are given and the other design groups play the games. Students rate the games prepared by their classmates for such elements as clear rules, interest, ease of play, and appearance. It is always gratifying to see how carefully students respond to questions about the game they have created, and how positive the evaluators are having experienced the trials of creating their own game. The teacher evaluates the games for creativity, meeting all requirements, and correct grammar. Each student's written presentation is also evaluated for accuracy of grammar, creativity, and meeting the requirements set forth.

This practice is innovative since it takes the students away from the usual text and other routine activities of the class. It is easily replicable since it requires only normal classroom supplies, and can be used in any language classroom. It promotes student achievement in the areas of vocabulary acquisition, communication, written and oral, and engages the students in critical thinking, fun, cooperative and individual activities. Students enjoy this activity and find it meaningful. It provides a way to apply the skills they have studied and promotes learning while renewing the students' interest in language study.

**Describe the educational needs of students that the practice addresses and how they were identified. List the Core Curriculum Content and Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards addressed by the practice and describe how the practice addresses the standard(s).**

***EL JUEGO*** is an activity that provides the students with an opportunity to use the language in a practical activity. It clearly addresses the Core Curriculum Content standard 7.1:

All students will be able to communicate at a basic literacy level, orally and in writing, in at least one language other than English.

Since the written reports submitted by each student are in Spanish, the student is required to demonstrate his/her ability to write effective, comprehensible material in a language other than English. The packaging information, the rules, the game board directions, and other markings on the game and its parts also demonstrate the effectiveness of the language. As other design teams "test" the product by playing the game, they evaluate the clarity and accuracy of the communications. Recommendations are made to the design team and are acted upon before the game is submitted to the teacher for final evaluation. In a level three class, much of the planning and discussion will revert to English; however, the students will often engage in a discussion of the correct Spanish expression and phrasing required.

On beginning the assignment, the students are told that they are designing a game for the Spanish language market. ***EL JUEGO*** addresses the Core Curriculum Content standard 7.2:

All students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the interrelationship between language and culture for at least one world language in addition to English.

In planning the game, students must call upon what they know about the culture of the Hispanic world. The culturally appropriate use of usted, the formal, or tú, the familiar, for commands and directions must be considered in relation to the intended audience of the game itself, the written submissions to the director of the company or, in the case of the press releases, the public audience.

In the case of those games that award play money, the money is represented in the form of a monetary unit associated with a particular target country. Pricing of the game is also stated in the appropriate monetary form. Students must check current conversion rates, and be sure that the figures they use are reasonable. Topics for the game, settings, and activities must be culturally appropriate for the specific sector of the Hispanic market that the student designers designate. The students must ensure that the game is free of local references or themes predominantly associated with the United States.

**Describe the assessment measures used to determine the extent to which the objectives of the practice have been met.**

*EL JUEGO* is an activity that makes use of cooperative learning, while preserving the all-important element of individual accountability. While students must engage in cooperative activities such as brainstorming, discussion, compromise, and delegation of responsibility, each student retains individual responsibility for one of the written reports that must be submitted. The students receive an individual grade for the report they create as well as a grade for the cooperative product, the game itself. The teacher is able to make many embedded assessments during the planning and production stages of this project. Students can be observed as they interact with the group and while working on their individual reports. During this process, the teacher can also conduct informal interviews with individuals, or the group, to determine what the plan of the game is, the areas of difficulty, and the adherence to time lines. The teacher can suggest, or require, that the students turn in progress reports at the end of each day. Allowing five minutes for students to complete these reports at the end of each class helps students to bring closure to the activities of the day, and to consider what elements need to be addressed before and/or during the next class. These daily reports can be used as part of the evaluation process.

While the teacher is actively involved in overseeing the activities of the students, it will be obvious that students are reviewing particular grammar structures in order to complete the game requirements. Opportunities present themselves for the teacher to review proper use of the dictionary for translation purposes, and specific grammar points. The teacher will be aware of the kinds of structures that will be required, and can provide mini-lessons at the start or end of each day, or as homework assignments. Commonly students will need to use the command forms and the passive voice. With guidance from the teacher these forms can be reviewed, or presented, and designated as specific grammar areas that will be evaluated in the grading process of the game and the report.

As students work through the brainstorming and creation of the game, they use critical thinking skills to make judgments about the expectations and needs of the target market group. They practice inter-personal skills as they make suggestions and compromises, and as they delegate and accept responsibility for the work to be completed. Time management and meeting deadlines become real to students as they realize that the whole class will evaluate the work they are doing. When students evaluate the games they have created and the games made by classmates, they judge the product in terms of measurable elements, do the rules make sense, and in subjective areas, is the game aesthetically pleasing. All these skills transcend the language classroom and benefit the student in other classes and real life situations.

The teacher will observe that the students frequently hold discussions about appropriate grammatical and vocabulary usage. Students become involved in explaining and teaching each other as they review what they know and help others to make revisions. In planning the game itself, students engage in metacognitive activities as they discuss how they approach learning and comprehension and how to make the game interesting and easy to play.

There are many opportunities for the teacher to measure student achievement during the creation of the game. Real gains will be made in the use of language that will carry over to future achievements, but undoubtedly, the most obvious gain is in the area of motivation. This activity provides an opportunity for authentic use of the language being studied. It rejuvenates the students in their study of the language, and allows them to realize how much of the language they actually know and can use effectively. The game is not an assignment that is completed, graded, and forgotten. Students retain a sense of pride and ownership, and they will ask to play the game again and again. The games can be played by other classes as well, and students derive a great deal of pride from the knowledge that they have used the Spanish language in an authentic application.